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From the Reference Desk

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From the Reference Desk

Reference Reviews

Column Editor: **Tom Gilson** (College of Charleston) <gilson@cofc.edu>

Every once in a while all reference librarians are bedeviled by an errant fact or two which elude our best efforts. In recent weeks a number of "handy" little items have come my way which might help alleviate some of the frustration.

If you are interested in toll free numbers for a variety of environmental firms, agencies and organizations *Krupin's Toll-Free Environmental Directory* published by Direct Contact Publishing (1996, 1-885035-02-0, \$14.95) is worth a look. Containing a listing for over seven thousand toll free numbers for businesses, consultants, associations and government agencies involved in things ranging from hazardous waste to recycling, this slender volume would be helpful for anyone seeking information from such groups. In addition, those seeking careers in the environmental field would find it of value as a source of contacts. In fact author **Paul Krupin** offers a brief section of advice for job seekers and those looking for business contacts. The book is divided by area of environmental interest and then entries are listed alphabetically. One suggestion which would enhance the value of the book would be to include a geographical arrangement within each area of interest as well.

A wealth of statistical information can be found in **Cheryl Russell's** *Official Guide to Racial and Ethnic Diversity*. Published by New Strategist Publications (1996, 0-885070-03, \$89.95) this reference provides a statistical profile of the four major racial groups in America: Asians, whites, blacks, and Native Americans. Hispanics, who are considered multicultural, are included as well. In the case of the Asians and Hispanics, separate profiles are also offered for the largest ethnic groups; Chinese Americans and Mexican Americans. Most of the data is collected from the 1990 census so this information is obviously available in other sources. It is the way the statistics are organized which gives the *Official Guide to Racial and Ethnic Diversity* its value. Each group is covered in an individual chapter with statistics on education, health, household and living arrangement, housing, income, labor force and population given for all groups. Wealth and spending statistics are also given for blacks, whites and Hispanics. (There was no available wealth and spending data for Asians and Native Americans according to author Cheryl Russell who points out that the government collects "information on smaller racial and ethnic groups less frequently and in less detail.") Each of the sections within each chapter is introduced by interesting comparisons and trends but

the vast majority of the book is taken up by statistical tables. In addition to these chapters on individual groups, there is one on the total population and one which offers statistics on the attitudes of Americans on specific issues. These statistics were gleaned from the **General Social Survey** taken by

the **National Opinion Research Center** of the **University of Chicago** in 1994. The book has a table of contents and a thorough listing of each statistical table, chapter by chapter but unfortunately no index. Any future editions should consider one, especially if expanded.

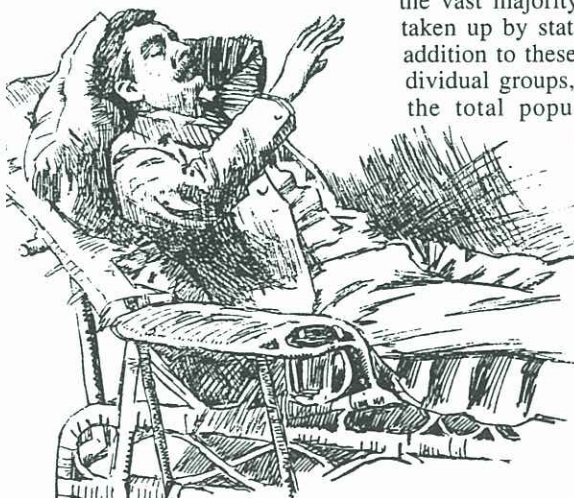
The *Dictionary of Nutrition and Dietetics* written by **Karen Eich Drummond** and published by Van Nostrand Reinhold (1996, 0-442022-25-5, \$39.95) is full of interesting information for nutritionist and lay person alike. The definitions contained in this volume are often more than just a couple of sentences long and some like the ones on dietary fiber and fat substitutes are encyclopedic in nature. But what gives this book its value as a compendium of facts are the many charts, tables and illustrations which clarify the definitions. In addition there are appendices listing centers to contact for dietary information and various professional associations, as well as a section giving recommended dietary allowances and a question and answer section on food labeling.

Business librarians will welcome a new edition of **Phyllis S. Pierce's** *Dow Jones Averages 1885-1995* published by Irwin Professional Publishing (1996, 0-7863-0974-1 \$95). Taking the Dow from its beginnings in 1885, Pierce provides the daily averages for each day of the month up through December 1995. Included are the industrial, the transportation (until 1970 known as the railroad average), the utilities and the bond averages as well as the daily volume of sales. The volume also includes a brief history which outlines the evolution of the Dow. My only complaint is that there is no list of the current stocks which make up the various Dow lists. In order to get that information readers have to read through the Dow's history and assemble it themselves.

The *Sports Address Bible: the Comprehensive Directory of Sports Addresses* published by Global Sports Productions (1996, 0-9619181-6-0, \$21.95) answers the needs of fans who can't live without the addresses and phone numbers of their favorite teams. All types of sports are included from minor league baseball to professional lacrosse. Even pseudo sports like professional wrestling have their listings. In addition to team addresses, those for sports leagues, associations, museums and halls of fame, sports collectors, media outlets and sports publications are included. Each entry has the address, phone number and fax number (when available) as well as the name of the chief operating officer. In future editions author **Edward T. Kobak Jr.** might consider including email addresses but generally speaking this book offers information that reference librarians, particularly in public libraries, will find very useful.

The *Political Data Handbook: OECD Countries* is part of the *Comparative European Politics* series published by Oxford University Press (1997, 0-19-828-053-X, \$95). Covering statistics dating from 1950 forward, this reference provides data for the twenty-four nations which make up the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The OECD is comprised of the countries of Western Europe along with the United States, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Canada and the first part of this volume provides comparative statistics on population, social structure, employment, the economy, public finance, government structure, communications and politics as well as statistics for the European Union as a whole. The second part gives the reader information about the political structure and leadership as well as selected statistics for each of the individual countries. The editors used some two hundred and thirty sources

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to compile their statistics. Sources are cited at the bottom of each statistical table.

Of course reference collections are used for more than providing statistics and pure facts so a variety of other sources have also come across my desk recently in the form of dictionaries and subject encyclopedias. A few of the more interesting include both brand new releases and updated and revised editions of past works.

Oxford University Press has made another major contribution with its *Encyclopedia of U.S. Foreign Relations* (1997, 0-19-511055-2, \$450). This is a four-volume set which offers over one thousand articles examining how the United States has interacted with other nations throughout its history. Policy and doctrines, treaties and conventions, major events and crises and biographical entries are included. But of particular help are the articles on individual countries. Students looking for concise, well-written articles on the history of U.S. relations with specific countries like Cuba or Iran will find them here. The articles range in length from those which are less than half page long like the one on **Madeleine Albright** to those which are more extensive like the sixteen-page article on the Cold War. The articles are thorough and scholarly and individually signed by the author. There is a directory of the 373 contributors along with their credentials in volume one. Each article has a bibliography of further readings and herein lies my one complaint. These bibliographies could be more extensive and include more journal articles. The majority are short and include only books. However, a nice added feature which helps compensate is an appendix entitled "Classified Bibliography of Reference Works" which lists other encyclopedias, atlases, annual surveys, documentary collections and statistical sources. Maps and tables are provided throughout the set when appropriate and in volume four there is a useful chronology covering events from 1754 through September of 1996. Volume four also contains a table of basic statistical information for the current 185 members of the United Nations as well as the index for the entire set.

The *Encyclopedia of Latin American Literature* published by the British publisher Fitzroy Dearborn (1997, 1-884964-18-4, \$125) is a one-volume work which focuses on an subject of ever-increasing interest. Editor **Verity Smith's** purpose with this volume is to "re-ignite an interest in the continent's past literature and also in stimulating interest in that of smaller countries of the region like Ecuador and Bolivia." There has also been an attempt to give recognition to women writers and their contributions with articles on a number of women writers and on Feminism and Feminist Literary Theory. Naturally many of the entries center on individual writers and more particularly, their work. These articles are in two parts, the major part being a description and critical evaluation of the author's work which is then followed by the second part, a brief biographical sketch. Each article is signed and contains a useful bibliography of selected works and further readings. There are also a number of articles which are topical, including those which highlight national literatures, certain literary movements and different types of literature. The articles are arranged alphabetically but there is both a title index and a subject index which provide access to more specific areas of interest. The volume also has a list of the contributors and their credentials. This is a work which will be of use to layman, student and scholar.

One-volume references are particularly well suited for some subjects and Garland's *Business Cycles and Depressions: An Encyclopedia* (1997, 0-8240-0944-4, \$95) is a good example. The study of business cycles and financial upheaval is really a subcategory of the "dismal science" economics. Of course, there are outstanding reference sets on economics like the *New Palgrave: A Dictionary of Economics*. However, that does not

preclude the need for references which focus on certain aspects of the subject and which also can serve to update older more comprehensive sets. *Business Cycles and Depressions* contains articles on business cycle theory and concepts, historical events, influential economists, and key factors like interest rates and monetary policy. Unfortunately because of the nature of the subject, the reading is not easy going. Some of the articles are technical and previous background would be helpful. The educated layperson will find this book useful, but students and scholars will be the main audience. The bibliographies at the end of each article are impressive for a one-volume work. The articles are arranged alphabetically, but there are two indexes which provide more specific access to the text. One is an author index which actually refers to the economists covered in the encyclopedia not the contributors to the encyclopedia. (There is a separate listing for them.) The other is a straightforward subject index. In addition, helpful "see also" references are provided for each article. However, I do have one major gripe about this volume and that is the paper binding. It has already begun to tear at the top of the spine and will eventually require a trip to the bindery.

The *Historical Dictionary of the Gulf States* (Scarecrow, 1997, 0-808-3203-8, \$45) is one of those books which could be placed in either reference or circulation depending on need. In fact, I have heard it argued that the entire Scarecrow series of historical dictionaries falls into that category and I agree. In our library, many are still placed in reference because they often deal with countries that have little else published about them in a reference format and this recent volume fits that profile. This *Historical Dictionary* covers the five nations which make up the Gulf Arab States; Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The Gulf Arab States draw their significance from the fact that they hold 20% of the world's identified oil reserves while at the same time are located in one of the most politically tense regions in the world. While there are entries on historic figures, earlier empires and on historic Arab tribes, much of the *Historical Dictionary of the Gulf Arab States* focuses on more current events and issues. Political, economic, cultural and biographical topics are represented. Overall, the *Historical Dictionary of the Gulf Arab States* adequately covers its subject but one is left wishing it were more comprehensive and better organized. For example, Islam is a major feature of this area's history and while there is an entry on Islam and Islam does receive mention in some other entries, there are no entries for the major branches of Islam represented in the Gulf States. The Sunni, Shia and Ibadis branches are discussed, but none have entries of their own and unfortunately, there is no index which would have helped refer the reader to the proper entries. The argument can be made that an index for a brief historical dictionary like this is unnecessary, but with no index, a thorough use of "see" reference is needed, and this book is lacking that as well. On the plus side, there is a sixty-three page bibliography broken down into twelve subcategories and an appendix of current government officials. The book ends with appendices containing the text of the "Kuwait Declaration" of Gulf Cooperation Council, 1991 and the UN Security Council on Iraq Resolutions on Iraq, 1990.

Garland has published an expanded second edition of their well-received *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (1997, 0-8153-1663-1, \$150). Adding some 250 new entries as well as updating a number of the bibliographies, editor **Everett Ferguson** has produced a worthy successor to the original. Although this is obviously a scholarly endeavor the writing is straightforward and the content factual. The time period covered by this two-volume set extends from the life of Jesus through the 7th century expanding the chronology of the first edition to include more coverage of Christianity's eastern expansion. The entries include biographies of important figures as well as descriptive essays on

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Not Exactly Rick Dees by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

The worlds "hottest" papers rankings have come out of the **Institute for Scientific Information (ISI)**. The hottest research: **Roger J. Davis** at the **U. Of Mass. Worcester** with 11 papers on the hot topic of signal transduction. Other hot topics included theoretical physics, neuroscience, genomics, and

molecular biology. Mad cows were responsible for the number-one "red hot" research paper in 1996: "A new variant of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in the U.K." by **R.G. Will** and colleagues published in *The Lancet*. See — "Burning Up the Citation Logs," *Science*, v.275 (March 14, 1997) p.1573.

And the Winner Is ... by Pamela Rose (SUNY at Buffalo)

Galileo <www.galileo.web-zone.it>, an electronic magazine started by a group of scientists and journalists, has won the **Pirelli INTERNETional Prize**. The Italian tire giant wanted to call attention to the enlightened side of the Internet, rather than popular portrayals of the Web as a source of pornography or a guide to making explosives.


Other winners include an Italian science high school's hypertext project on lichens, and a multimedia arts and crafts encyclopedia on CD-ROM. Next year's prize is open to all European Internet users, and by the year 2000, all Internet users will be eligible. See — "Internet Science Prize," *Science*, v.275 (February 28, 1997) p.1271.

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doctrines, practices, liturgy, early schisms, etc. In addition, there are regional surveys of early Christian history and articles dealing with Christian art and architecture, ethics and concepts like heaven, hell and immortality. The bibliographies are good and often include the writings of the early church fathers and other original works as well as secondary books and journal articles. In the front of the first volume, there is a listing of abbreviations for the journals, reference works and series cited in the bibliographies. There is also a helpful chronology. A good index is necessary for a work like this and generally the index here is helpful. But more "see also" reference might have been included. For example, in searching for information about the apostles there is no "see also" from the often interchangeable word "disciple". Obviously this is a minor quibble. On the whole, the *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* deserves consideration by both academic and public libraries for addition to their collections.

Robert Hogan has revised and expanded his *Dictionary of Irish Literature* for Greenwood Press (1996, 0-313-29172-1, \$135). Some attention is paid to Irish literature written in the Irish language. Reprinted from the first edition is **Seamus O'Neill's** article on Gaelic literature as well as a new article on contemporary Irish language literature by **Alan Titley**. However, it is Irish literature written in English on which this two-volume set concentrates. The main contents of the *Dictionary* consist of author entries and the over one thousand author entries contained in the body are of writers who primarily wrote in English. These entries contain biographical information, critical

comment and a bibliography. The bibliographies list the major works of the author and in most cases, references about their work. There are also entries for influential institutions, publications and theater groups like the **Irish Academy of Letters**, the *Journal of Irish Literature* and the **Abbey Theatre**. The set is rounded out by a chronology, a bibliography of further readings and a thorough index. Reference collections in need of books on Irish literature will want to add this to their holdings even if they have the earlier 1979 edition.

And finally, Oxford University Press has brought out the third edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* edited by **Simon Hornblower** and **Antony Spawforth** (1996, 0-19-866172-X, \$60). The second edition was published in 1970 so this work was obviously due for an update. Expanded by more than 450 pages, the third edition includes some "6250 contributions written by an international team of 364 scholars." Most of the entries from the second edition have been rewritten and approximately 840 new entries added. A look through the listing of these new entries provided at the beginning of the book indicates that broader more thematic topics have been added like class struggle, death, food supply, imperialism, kingship, etc. This goes hand in hand with the editors' stated goal of expanding the emphasis of this reference to include more than the "purely literary" aspects of Greek and Roman studies. An obvious attempt has been made to integrate the various disciplines which have influenced classical studies during the past twenty-five years. In addition, articles on previously undertreated subjects like women, the near east and its influence and ancient sexuality have been included. Overall, given the significance of the topic and the quality of the effort, most library reference collections will want to add this updated edition. 

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America that I can think of that raise their prices when faced with declining sales. Business 101 students can predict what will happen.

On a more positive note, let's talk about Marketing 103. Our consortial activity would not be possible if publishers or vendors of the products weren't willing to negotiate. Even if Skidmore by itself could afford *Current Contents*, our user demand and usage would not justify the price. When you combine the student populations and usage of the Coleslaw libraries which purchased *PsycInfo* you equal one large university library. Remain flexible when dealing with small libraries. We are not your primary market. We are not your

primary source of income. We are an additional market. We are an additional source of income. Without price concessions we are no market at all. You have nothing to lose. But both libraries and publishers can gain.

Final Thoughts

A few years ago, I said that the resource-sharing and collaboration between libraries is the silver lining in the serials crisis. I now think that along with the technological changes, the increase in serials prices is the best thing to happen to libraries in the last ten years. I am a better librarian because of the price increases and the nearly annual cancellation projects. I have become more creative, flexible, and a risk taker. The experience with price increases has made me continually evalu-

ate what libraries do and how we do things. I'm always looking for a more effective and a more economical way to get the job done. From surveys and from the doubling in our bibliographic instruction sessions, I know student and faculty library satisfaction has increased. I never thought librarianship could be so exciting and rewarding. I'm not sure when we will wrestle with the issue of who owns and controls scholarly information, but I look forward to it. In the meantime, we will continue to cooperate and collaborate with other libraries to meet our users' needs. 

NB: This paper was adapted from a presentation at the 1996 Charleston Conference Preconference on "Prioritizing Serials Acquisition."